

Good Afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I am submitting written testimony today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

I support the establishment of a Teacher Advisory Committee so that teachers have a formal mechanism within the Connecticut State Department of Education to inform policies and their implementation. As the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Selection Committee Chair, I can attest to the outstanding level of talent, expertise, and depth of knowledge that members of a Connecticut Teachers of the Year Council cohort group (State Teachers of the Year, Finalists, and Semifinalists) would bring to the Teacher Advisory Committee. These teachers are chosen annually from a large pool of Connecticut District Teachers of the Year, through submission of a Connecticut Teacher of the Year application to the State Department of Education. Applications include biographical and professional information, essays on topics ranging from personal teaching philosophy to the pressing issues facing teachers in public schools, and letters of endorsement. Each application is reviewed by at least five members of a statewide selection committee representing Connecticut's major educational organizations, former state teachers of the year, and community stakeholders. This rigorous vetting process ensures that our Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Finalists, and Semifinalists serve as expert practitioners who are informed on current issues that impact public education, understand the policy process, and can effectively serve as teacher-ambassadors for public education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lauren Danner

Connecticut Teacher of the Year Selection Committee Chair

2017 Connecticut Teacher of the Year